

Remarks

In the Final Rejection mailed February 25, 2005, claim 1 was objected to because it was considered that the use of the word "then" in the claim did not adequately set forth the sequence of the method steps being claimed. In the Office Action, it was suggested that the claim be amended to include the statement "comprising the steps in the order of" to make clear that claim 1 recites a series of method steps.

In a telephone interview conducted with the Examiner on July 25, 2005, the amendment of claim 1 along the above lines was again suggested by the Examiner to overcome the basis for the objection.

Claim 1 has been amended herein to include the language suggested by the Examiner, i.e. "comprising the steps in the order of". It is therefore believed that this amendment of claim 1 puts the claim into condition for allowance, and thereby puts the application into condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3, 7, 8, 12-15, 17, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious in view of the disclosure of the Graf reference. It is argued in the rejection that it would be inherent to move the sleeve of the Graf reference along the electric conductor to a position in which a portion of the sleeve is adjacent a crimping location of the terminal for the benefit of mechanically securing these parts.

Using the Graf connector in the manner described in the rejection is in contrast to the intended manner of using the Graf connector described in the reference, and therefore would not be obvious in view of the Graf reference disclosure. The Graf reference specifically sets forth that it is desirable to secure the sleeve to the terminal before the wire is secured to the terminal. The Graf reference specifically describes placing the protective sleeve 22 about the solder connector end section 28 of the terminal 20 and then applying a limited heat source to an end portion of the main sleeve body 42 to cause shrinkage of that portion of the sleeve body to create the stepped portion 52 shown in Figures 1 and 2. The Graf reference states that this is

the form in which the sealed solder wire connector assembly 12 would be sold in kit form (column 5, lines 26-38). Thus, the Graf reference specifically teaches attaching the sleeve to the connector before the electrical connector is attached to the connector. Thus, the sleeve would not be movable along the electric conductor after a portion of the conductor has been secured to the terminal as recited in claim 1. Because the proposed use of the Graf connector and sleeve set forth in the obviousness rejection of the claims is in contrast with the intended use set forth in the Graf reference, the proposed use would not be obvious to the ordinary skilled artisan. Claims 1-3, 7, 8, 12-15, 17, and 19 are therefore allowable over the prior art.

It is respectfully submitted that in view of the amendments and remarks presented herein, claims 1-19 currently pending in the application are allowable.

Respectfully submitted,

Thompson Coburn LLP

By: Joseph M. Rolnicki
Joseph M. Rolnicki
Reg. No. 32,653
One US Bank Plaza
St. Louis, MO 63101-1693
(314) 552-6286